

2002 ANNUAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS COMBINED WEED PROGRAM CITY OF LINCOLN Lancaster County Weed Control Authority

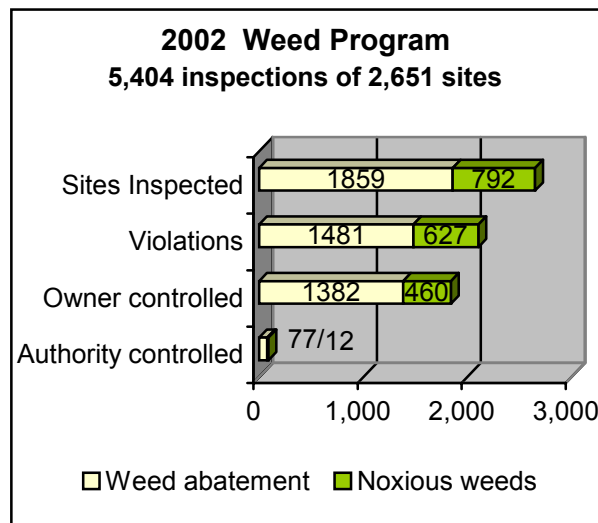
Even though 2002 was a very dry year, more acres of noxious weeds were found and the acres of weed abatement violations was about the same as 2001.

Year in Review

The most significant change during the year was the drop in purple loosestrife violations found. 443 violations were found in 2001 as compared to 117 purple loosestrife violations found in 2002.

Inspection Activity

5,404 inspections were made of 2,651 sites on 6,246 acres during the year. 2,116 violations were found on 1,752 acres.



Weed Abatement Program

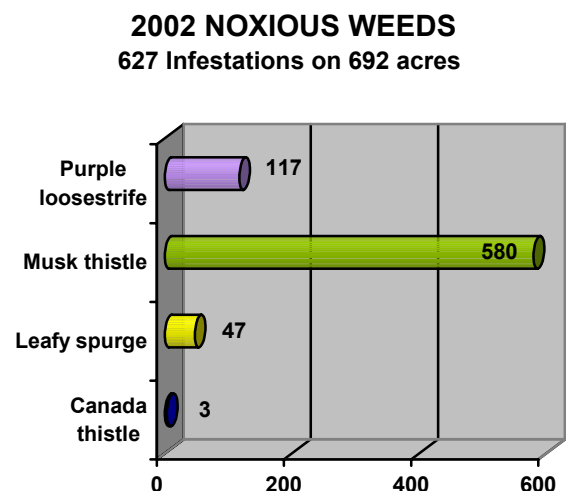
There was a continuing emphasis on obtaining voluntary compliance of landowners. 93% of owners cut their overgrowth after notification. This was accomplished with a 10% reduction in legal notifications issued from 56% down to 46%. 32 of the 33 violations on public property were taken care after notifying the 13 different entities by letter or phone. The east side of 84th Street was not cut. The adjacent landowners are outside the City limits and not subject to the City ordinance.

- * Made 3,978 inspections on 1,859 sites on 1,813 acres.
- Found 1,481 violations on 1,059 acres.
- Found no violations on 366 sites.
- 1,568 complaints received on 1,347 sites.

- 221 sites received multiple complaints.
- Sent 697 notices, 891 letters, published 69 notifications and made 59 personal contacts.
- 1,382 sites cut by landowners.
- 101 sites were contracted.
- 24 cut by landowners before contractor arrived.
- 78 sites force cut at the cost \$14,087.
- 50 properties were assessed for non-payment.

Noxious Weeds

627 infestations were found on 693 acres. There were 326 less purple loosestrife infestations found. The number of infestations found by noxious weed is shown below. 460 of these sites were controlled by landowners. The Authority controlled 7 sites and 5 were



contract controlled and owners billed \$838.

Program Management

There was a continuing emphasis on obtaining voluntary compliance of landowners. 93% of owners cut their overgrowth after notification. This was accomplished with a 10% reduction in legal notifications issued – 66% to 56%. All 38 violations on public property were taken care after notifying the 12 different entities by letter or phone. Information on active current inspections was made available on the Internet. The public can search for an inspection by address, parcel ID, owner's name or weed type.

Purple Loosestrife



Excellent cooperation from landowners resulted in a reduction of purple loosestrife violations found in 2002, 117 compared to 443 violations found in 2001. A strong information effort was continued along with the second year of a plant exchange program. Five nurseries participated in a program of providing a 25% discount for replacement plants for lythrum plants removed from flower gardens. The complete removal of these ornamental plantings is very important since they contribute to a seed bank that can be carried to streams and wetlands. A total of 28 wild infestations have been found along drainageways in the city. In the past five years infestations have spread from the central Platte River area all the way to the Missouri River. An initial meeting was held with representatives of the counties in the lower Platte River drainage and interested groups and state and federal agencies. The purpose of this effort is to develop a coordinated effort in these counties.

Recommendations

Multiple Violators

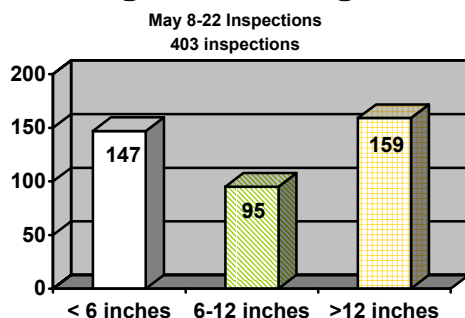
Letters were sent to all multiple violators and contacts made with the most violations. Increased cooperation was received from the past multiple violators, especially those with 10 or more violations. They contributed to 151 fewer violations than last year. Only one forced cutting was required as compared to 25 last year.

Recommendation: Use fax's instead of letters and legal notices to notify 12 large developers and owners of multiple parcels of weed abatement violations. In 2002, this would have amounted to over 200 notifications.

Cutting Height

It is not feasible or effective to implement the six-inch height requirement, which is not significantly above lawn mowing height. A very large number of parcels are in violation of the six height requirement at the

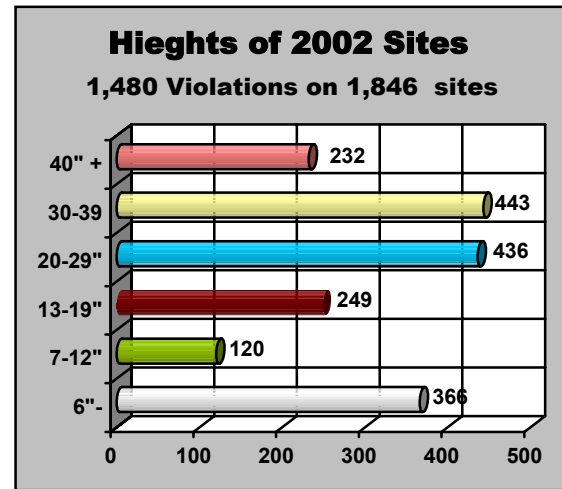
Vegetation Height



beginning of the season when it is often rainy but most are taken care of, as owners are able to get back to a

regular mowing schedule. Almost 80% of the 7 to 12 inch violations occurred in the first eleven inspection days (May 8 to May 22) of the season. 40% of the 6 and less inch height sites were also found during this same period. Over 60% of the 403 inspections made had vegetation less than 12 inches high.

As can be seen in the 2002 height graph, 92% of the violations are over 12 inches. They accounted for 97% of the 77 forced cuttings. The 4 force cuttings on sites



with 12 or less inch height were done as a result of 3 bankruptcies and an owner committed to a nursing home. All of the 486 sites found to have 12 inch high or less vegetation except these 4 sites were taken care of by the landowners. 366 were taken care of with out any contact from us and most of the other 116 would probably have done so without a contact from us.

The time used on these sites would be better utilized to address sites over 12 inches. Evidently this is the thought of several of our neighboring Midwest cities. Omaha, South Sioux City, Joplin, and Topeka have established a 12-inch or higher weed abatement requirement.

Concerns about field bindweed, dandelions, ragweeds, crabgrass, foxtails, and other lawn weeds can not be dealt with very well with a weed abatement ordinance. Cutting alone is not very effective control of these weeds. Education and information directed at weed prevention and grass management and establishment would be helpful.

The preparation of a General Fact Sheet is being coordinated with Public Works, Health and Parks & Recreation recommending an ordinance that would change the weed and worthless vegetation cutting height requirement from six inches to twelve inches.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the six inch height requirement in Chapter 8.46 be changed to twelve inches prior to the 2003 season.